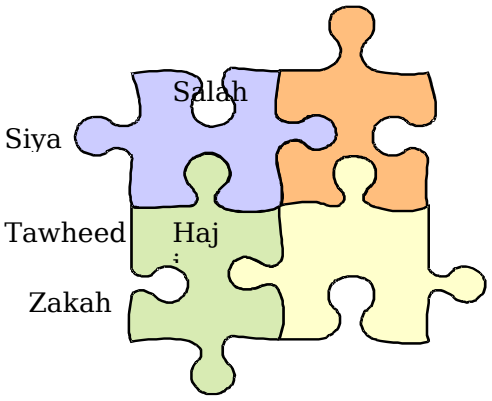
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious the Most Merciful



Overview Level 1

Version 2.2 – Rabi-ul-Awal - 1423

Foreword:

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High Level Content:

A detailed table of contents precedes each section.

Preface..... 5

Overview of Level I:

Opening..... 7
Background..... 7
About seeking Knowledge..... 8
In which part of the world are you?..... 9
Learning Arabic..... 9
Step-by Step..... 9
How to use this Curriculum..... 9
Recommended books..... 10
Curriculum Levels..... 10
Lesson Prerequisites..... 11
Progression..... 11
Associated courses..... 11
Summary of Level I Classes/Hours..... 12
Subjects covered in this curriculum (lesson breakdown)..... 13
Tawheed..... 13
Tahaara..... 14
Salah..... 15
What to Read in Salah..... 16
Zakah..... 17

Siyam…… 17
Hajj…… 18
A New Way of Life…… 18

Level 1:

Islamic Monotheism – Tawheed Lessons 1-7…… 19
Detail Table of Contents…… 20
Purification – Tahaara Lessons 1-6…… 65
Detail Table of Contents…… 66
Prayer – Salah Lessons 1-7…… 111
Detail Table of Contents…… 112
What to Read in Salah Lessons 1-6…… 177
Detail Table of Contents…… 178
Alms – Zakah Lessons 1-2…… 229
Detail Table of Contents…… 230
Fasting – Siyam Lessons 1-2…… 251
Detail Table of Contents…… 252
Hajj – Pilgrimage Lessons 1-2…… 287
Detail Table of Contents…… 288
A New Way of Life Lesson…… 323
Detail Table of Contents…… 324

Preface:

Alhamdulillah. Indeed, all praise is due to Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from our souls and evils and our wrong doings. He whom Allah guides, no one can misguide; and he whom He misguides, no one can guide. May peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad, the last of the prophets and messengers, and upon his family and esteemed companions.

We bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship, except Allah, and we bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.

First and foremost we thank the Almighty Allah for having granted us the health, strength, and time to have completed this long overdue project. Without the Mercy and Blessings of our Sustainer we can achieve nothing.

For many years we have been fortunate to have worked in the center in Jeddah where they teach new and 'old' Muslims. We have also had the blessing to witness almost daily people embracing Islam. For so many years this project has been planned and year after year it is delayed for some reason or the other. Yet we (the developing group) knew that this project must be done due to the need for it all around the world. Finally in 2000 (1421), all the centers in Jeddah agreed to form one steering committee that will oversee and supervise this project. The first draft was ready within one year and it was handed to all centers for comment. At the time of writing two years had already passed since we started and formed the group to develop this program. Not that it takes that long to do it, it requires commitment and assistance from so many people, and since just about everyone is on a voluntary basis, it becomes difficult. In May of 2002, with the Mercy of Allah, we were ready for a trial of the curriculum. We conducted a "Teach the Teachers" seminar which was followed by a four month trial. We are writing this so the reader can appreciate the magnitude of time and effort that was required to bring this program to a reality.

You may think that this material is too much for a new Muslim and that it is better to give a new Muslim some pamphlets and general books about Islam. Think about it. The person has just made the most important decision in his/her life and we give him/her a pamphlet as to say to him/her, this is how important Islam is and that is all you need to know for now. Imagine if you were a first year medical student and all you were given on your first day was a few pamphlets and some very basic books about medicine. Would that give you an impression that what you are about to study is important and that a serious effort will be needed? Of course not! Similarly when a person embraces Islam he or she should not be made to feel that there isn't much to learn, no on the contrary he or she should understand that this is only the beginning…

From experience we have found that when a person embraces Islam, Muslims tend to search for the smallest and thinnest book they can find to give to the person. We believe that we MUST get out of this mentality and we sincerely hope that this work will go a long way in changing that.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the brothers and sisters that contributed to the success of this program. Also to all the dawah centers in Jeddah and their teachers and students that helped us to get to this final product. A very special thanks to sister Tasnim Amod for allowing us to use the salah diagrams she developed for her book on salah.

We ask Allah's forgiveness for our own shortcomings and any mistakes we may have made in writing and compiling this material. All praise is due to Allah, our Creator and Sustainer, Lord of the Worlds.

And Allah Knows Best!

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Rabi-ul-Awal 1423 (June 2002)
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السَّلامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُـهُ

Welcome to the Islamic Studies Curriculum level I

Opening:

Verily, the best speech is Allah's speech; the best guidance is Muhammad's (ﷺ) guidance; and the worst matters (in creed or worship) are those innovated (by the people), for every innovated matter is a bid'ah (prohibited innovation), and every bid'ah is an act of misguidance that (whoever initiated it) will reside in the Fire.

True education is that which improves a person's knowledge and understanding of the religion. It makes a person more aware of the purpose of his/her creation and his/her role in this life. It builds in his/her heart a strong belief that enables him/her to distinguish between right and wrong, and strong faith that compels him/her to abide by the right and refrain from the wrong.

One other point of major importance that a new Muslim should be aware of, is that in Islam, our rewards and punishment will be based on our intentions and not necessarily our actions. Meaning that if you do any action to show people or for any other than the prescribed reason, then that is what you will be accountable for. So you must ensure that all your actions (including that of seeking knowledge) must be solely for the sake of Allah.

Background:

People around the world are embracing Islam daily in large numbers. Most of the time there are no standard and structured courses or programs available to them that can assist these new Muslims in obtaining the knowledge required to practice their new found faith correctly. Though there are thousands of Islamic books on various subjects and no lack of advice from other Muslims, the new Muslim normally finds himself/herself confused and 'drowned' in the sea of books and advice available. This curriculum was designed and developed with the following objectives in mind:

1. To provide the correct knowledge based on **Qur'aan and Sunnah**.
2. To provide a new Muslim with a **simple** and structured, **step-by-step** program.
3. To firstly provide the new Muslim with only the very basic knowledge (the minimum that any Muslim should know), about all **5 pillars**, in the shortest amount of time.
4. To then build on the basics learnt, with a more detailed (slower pace) program.

5. To provide **timely** (just in time) knowledge.
6. To address the special needs and regulations of the **women** in Islam.
7. To provide a curriculum that can be used for different **media** of instruction, i.e. class, individual or correspondence study.

With these aforementioned objectives in mind, an innovative and very structured yet simple method was developed. It is unique in its step-by-step guide, and specially designed diagrams. Each subject is broken down into various levels. The transliteration method used is also new and ground breaking. It introduces a new concept that previous methods do not have. It does not use any substitute letters for the Arabic letters that have no English equivalent, such as the ‘ ح ‘. This method may seem more difficult at first, but the advantage it has, is that it will ‘force’ the student to at least learn that particular Arabic letter and its correct pronunciation from the beginning. As it is very difficult to 'unlearn' incorrect pronunciation later on. An example being:

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمْ

Bismillahir-rahmaanir-raheem (traditional method)

Bismillahir-ra ◌ْhmaanir-ra ◌ِheem (our method)

For this reason the Arabic alphabet is addressed in the first lesson of "What to Read in Salah". If you are studying Arabic separately then parts of the first lesson may be omitted.

In addition, the subject of prayer is divided into three different units, instead of only one. There are also three ‘just in time’ lessons, namely ‘A New Way of Life’ (important issues to learn immediately), ‘Hajj Special’ (for those that embrace Islam and plan to perform Hajj fairly soon after that), and ‘Siyam (fasting) Special‘(for those that embraces Islam shortly before or during Ramadaan). The result of this curriculum also means it can be used to teach children as well as a refresher for ‘old’ Muslims. Having said that and having observed some of the actions of many Muslims today, it may be advisable for them to use the program in the same way as a new Muslim would.

Also due to the high esteem Islam places on women and because of their special nature and role, we have endeavoured to cover all their related issues and regulations.

About seeking Knowledge:

In Islam knowledge must precede any action. As a new Muslim, you may find so many contradictions in what you learn versus what you see other Muslims do. This is mainly due to lack of knowledge on the part of the other Muslims. So do not despair. Seeking knowledge is a duty on every Muslim. Ignorance will not be an acceptable excuse on the Day of Judgement. Hence seeking knowledge is one of the highest types of worship. Our beloved Prophet (□) told his companions that:

"Seeking knowledge is a (religious) duty on every Muslim".
(At-Tabarani and Ibn Majah)

He (ﷺ) also said:

"A person who follows a path for acquiring knowledge, Allah will make easy the passage to Paradise for him".
(Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, an-Nasai and Ibn Majah)

Lastly, information only becomes knowledge, once it is applied. So fellow Muslims, do not let all this information be wasted, by not acting upon it…

In which part of the world are you?

Though this curriculum was developed in Saudi Arabia, it was done with the whole world in mind. So it all depends on where you are in the world that may determine how you view or use this text. The reason being that you may notice such a big variation in certain aspects depending on where you are or who is teaching you. Also unfortunately in many parts of the world, certain Muslims will try to force certain opinions and will violently try to discourage you from even entertaining another opinion. It is because of this very behaviour that most of the Muslims are so ignorant about the very basics of the most beautiful religion. The rulings given in this curriculum is entirely based on Qur'aan and Sunnah and provides all the references and proof. So if you choose to practice or follow something contrary to what is taught in this curriculum, then it is incumbent on you or the person teaching you to provide the authentic evidence. Do not become despondent or feel down hearted, you have the correct tools in front of you. This is discussed in more detail in Level II.

Learning Arabic:

It goes without saying, that learning Arabic is of utmost importance. Having said that, it is not easy to do, but it should be a goal of all Muslims. Knowing Arabic certainly makes a big difference. However you should not use it as an excuse for not obtaining knowledge. Arabic is the language of the Qur'aan and the language of Paradise. So grasp any opportunity that comes along to learn this beautiful language.

Step-by-Step:

Many new Muslims are very motivated and may take on too much too soon. So after a while they get de-motivated as it becomes too overbearing for them. The advice is: **Slowly** and **Step-by-Step** is the key to success in becoming knowledgeable in all aspects of Islam. There is no rush; you have the rest of your life ahead of you. A Muslim must continue to learn everyday, until his or her death.

How to use this Curriculum:

This introduction unit is a recommend prerequisite before embarking on the curriculum. Understand what is expected from you, and how this curriculum will help you. Review the details in this unit, and prepare a personalized study plan. Be consistent and act on what you learn. Also choose the method of learning that suites you best: one-on-one, class instruction or possibly by correspondence. If you are not able to attend a class, then seek a knowledgeable and God-fearing scholar to be your mentor. If you are at level I and your circumstances require that you need to know about a particular aspect in more detail (i.e., about Salatul-Jumuah or salah in congregation) then it is advised to use the text for that aspect in whatever level it may be.

There are two subjects that we strongly recommend you study with a teacher/guide, and that is 'Tawheed' and 'What to read in Salah'. With regards to 'Tawheed' it is because it is extremely important to properly understand this subject, as applying this pillar wrongly, means everything else you do may be unacceptable. This is the foundation of your belief, so it must be 100% correct. You will notice that there are six lessons of two hours each in level I, but the student text is not much compared to the other lessons. This highlights that each part requires time and correct and detail explanation by a good and knowledgeable instructor. With regards to "What to read in Salah", it is just as important to learn the correct pronunciation right from the start.

This overview document has a brief outline of what each level I lesson covers, but you should review the table of contents at the start of each subject for more details about the content.

Recommended Books:

All Muslims should have a good Islamic book library at home. At the end of "A New Way of Life" notes there is a list of recommend books to buy/read for further education and for future reference.

Following is the design and a detailed breakdown of each subject and what each level and unit covers.

Curriculum Levels:

The subjects are divided into the following categories.

Level I: **All Subjects.**

This level provides the student with the very basics only. The minimum he or she should know in order to practise this pillar correctly. Though it has some details, it does not delve too deep into any of the associated rulings or differences.

Level II: **All subjects, except Fasting (Siyam) and Pilgrimage (Hajj).**

This level builds on from what the students learnt in Level I. It is much more detailed and at a slower pace, with all explanations and evidences, in addition to the rest of the issues which are not covered in Level I.

Advanced: **Prayer (Salah) and What to read in Salah.**

This level goes into much more detail about all the other aspects that were not covered in the previous two levels. This is a special level for the above two subjects as there is so much more to learn, and it is separated as not to confuse the student or to make Level II over complicated. Though the other subjects also have more detail that can and should be studied, the details of these two subjects are very important for a Muslim to know, in order to practise the pillar of Salah properly. At the end of this level, the student should be very knowledgeable in all aspects of salah.

Special: **A New Way of Life; Hajj (Pilgrimage) and Siyam (Fasting).**

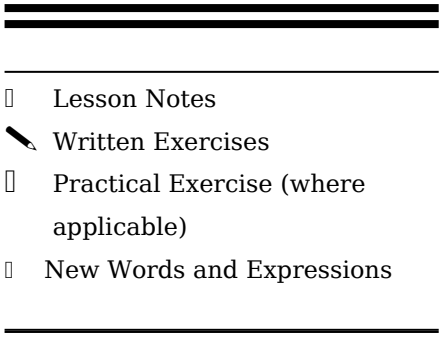
This level is what we refer to as ‘just in time’ knowledge. It is for those who embrace Islam at a time when this knowledge is needed immediately, such as before or during Ramadaan, also for those who plan to perform Hajj soon after having embraced Islam. These units encompass much of what is covered in Level I, but they concentrate on getting the student ‘ready’ as quickly as possible. It is recommended that the student still do level I later. With the exception of the lesson on "A New Way of Life" which is geared to address the new Muslims immediate concerns/needs/understanding, apart from the 5 pillars.

Lesson Prerequisites:

At the start of each lesson, the prerequisites are listed, and it is recommended that the students abide by them. This will allow the students to obtain the best value from the lessons and will also facilitate for all the students in a particular class to be at the same level.

Lesson Breakdown:

Each lesson is broken down into the following:



Progression:

All levels have a test at the end of the designated lessons. Students should not progress to another level, until they pass the appropriate test. At the end of Level I there are progression charts where you can plot your progress.

Associated Courses:

Also at the start of each lesson the associated courses are listed. This is to allow the student to plan his or her progress accordingly.

Summary of Level I classes/hours:

Proposed:

Subject		# Lessons	# Hours	# Tests	# Hours	Lessons/ Hours:	# Text Pages
1.	**Overview**	1	1	-	-	1/1	18
2.	**Tawheed**	6	12	1	1	7/13	46
3.	**Tahaara**	5	5	1	1	6/6	46
4.	**Salah**	6	6	1	1	7/7	66
5.	**What to Read**	5	9	1	1	6/10	52
6.	**Zakah**	1	2	1	1	2/3	22
7.	**Siyam**	1	2	1	1	2/3	36
8.	**Hajj**	1	2	1	1	2/3	36
9.	**A New Life**	1	2	-	-	1/2	31
Totals		27	41	7	7	34/48	353

	# Lessons	# Hours
Overall Totals for Level I	34	48

Actual (to be updated after trial):

Subject		# Lessons	# Hours	# Tests	# Hours	Lessons/ Hours:
1.	**Overview**					
2.	**Tawheed**					
3.	**Tahaara**					
4.	**Salah**					
5.	**What to Read**					
6.	**Zakah**					
7.	**Siyam**					
8.	**Hajj**					
9.	**A New Life**					
Totals						

	# Lessons	# Hours
Overall Totals for Level I		

The Level I subjects covered in this Curriculum:

1. Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism):

This is the **1st pillar** of Islam. This is the pillar that takes you from disbelief to belief. You cannot be a Muslim without fully understanding and implementing this pillar correctly. It is strongly recommended that you seek a knowledgeable instructor for guidance on this subject. The Islamic meaning of Tawheed is:

"**To single out Allah Almighty alone for worship, love, and submissiveness to Him by complying with His commands and submitting to them**"

What the student should know after each unit:

	Tawheed Level I	Duration (Hours)
Lesson 1	✓ The importance, meaning and categories of TAWHEED. ✓ Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah (the oneness of Allah in His Lordship)	2
Lesson 2	✓ Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah (the oneness of Allah in worship) ✓ Tawheed al-Asmaa' was-Sifaat (the oneness of Allah's Name and Attributes)	2
Lesson 3	✓ The importance and conditions of the Shahadah (testimony of faith). ✓ Violating the Shahadah (testimony of faith).	2
Lesson 4	✓ The fundamentals of Iman – Part 1.	2
Lesson 5	✓ The fundamentals of Iman – Part 2.	2
Lesson 6	✓ About Shirk and its consequences.	2
Lesson 7	✓ Test.	1

2. Salah (Prayer):

This is the **2nd pillar** of Islam. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) stated:

"Between a man and disbelief is (only) the abandonment of prayer".

(Muslim and Ahmad)

This statement is so powerful, that many scholars use it as their proof that those who do not perform their prayers, are outside the fold of Islam. Hence the importance of prayer cannot be over emphasized.

Instead of one class covering all aspects of salah, this subject is divided into:

1). Tahaara (covering all aspects of purification for salah and also in general).
2). Salah (covering the physical actions, rules and conditions of prayer).
3). What to read in Salah.

2.1 Tahaara (covering all aspects of purification for salah and also in general).

What the student should know after each unit:

	Tahaara Level I	**Duration (Hours)**
Lesson 1	✓ The importance of purification. ✓ What the impurities are. ✓ The different types of purification. ✓ The etiquette of using the bathroom.	1
Lesson 2	✓ The cleanliness obligations for a Muslim. ✓ When wudhu is required. ✓ The guidelines of ablution (wudhu). ✓ How to perform ablution. ✓ Supplication after performing wudhu.	1
Lesson 3	✓ The obligatory actions for ablution. ✓ The sunnah (recommended) actions for ablution. ✓ How to wipe over the socks during ablution. ✓ About Tayammum.	1
Lesson 4	✓ The actions that invalidate the ablution. ✓ The actions that do not invalidate ablution.	1
Lesson 5	✓ What is meant by major purification (Ghusl). ✓ What actions necessitate Ghusl. ✓ How the Ghusl is performed. ✓ Other guidelines in relation to Ghusl.	1

Lesson 6	✓ Test.	1

2.2 Salah (covering the physical actions, rules and conditions of prayer).

What the student should know after each unit:

	Salah Level I	**Duration (Hours)**
Lesson 1	✓ The Importance of salah. ✓ The salah and obligations towards establishing it. ✓ The first thing that we will be called to account for on the Day of Judgment.	1
Lesson 2	✓ The pillars and sunnah actions of salah. ✓ About the positions of salah. ✓ The actual positions (postures) of salah. ✓ Some of the common actions (in salah) that do not conform to the Sunnah.	1
Lesson 3	✓ The different types of salah (i.e.: fardh, sunnah, nafl). ✓ The 5 fardh salawaat and their number of obligatory units. ✓ The units of sunnah salah associated with the fardh (Sunnah-Raatiba). ✓ About Salatul-Witr, Salatul-Tahiyattul-Masjid and Salatul-Jumuah.	1
Lesson 4	✓ The importance of performing salah at its prescribed times. ✓ The timings (start and end) of the 5 fardh salah. ✓ The forbidden times for salah. ✓ The requirement and reward of salah in congregation. ✓ The special rewards for praying in Makkah, Madinah and Masjid Aqsa. ✓ Some of the benefits of salah.	1
Lesson 5	✓ The preconditions and some regulations for salah. ✓ The actions that invalidate salah. ✓ The actions that are allowed in salah. ✓ Some of the conditions related to women and salah.	1
Lesson 6	✓ What is disliked during salah but does not invalidate it. ✓ The rules for missed salah. ✓ What to do when arriving late for salah. ✓ What to do when a mistake is made during salah. ✓ Brief on Sajdah-Tilaawah (Sujood of recitation). ✓ Brief on Supplication in salah; Eid salah, Janazah salah.	1
		1

Lesson 7	✓ Test.	

2.3 What to read in Salah (covering the Arabic alphabet, the adhkaar, supplications, and some surah's).

It is strongly recommended that you seek a knowledgeable instructor for guidance on this subject or use and audio tape.

What the student should know after each unit:

	What to read in Salah Level I	**Duration (Hours)**
Lesson 1	✓ The ruling on what new Muslims can read in salah initially. ✓ The importance of correct recitation and pronunciation. ✓ The transliteration method used in these units. ✓ The Arabic letters that have no English equivalent. ✓ The Arabic vowels. ✓ How to pronounce the above letters in the Arabic alphabet as well as using the vowels. ✓ The full Arabic alphabet. ✓ Pronunciation of the Alphabet with the vowels.	2
Lesson 2	**Mandatory prerequisite class: Salah Lesson 2** ✓ The correct recitation of the Shahadah (Testimony of faith). ✓ What to read when starting to perform ablution. ✓ What to read after completing the ablution. ✓ What to read at the start of the salah (takbir). ✓ What to read in the bowing position (ruk'uh). ✓ What to read when coming up from the bowing position. ✓ What to read in the prostration position (sujood). ✓ What to read in the 1st sitting position (jalsa). ✓ When to read aloud and when to read softly.	2
Lesson 3	✓ What to read in the middle and last sitting position (tashahud). ✓ What to read to complete the salah (tasleem). ✓ What to read immediately at the completion of salah.	2
Lesson 4	**Mandatory prerequisite classes: Tahaara Lessons 1 - 4** ✓ The correct recitation of the opening surah (al--Faatiَح) ✓ The opening surah by memory.	2
Lesson 5	✓ The correct recitation of surah Al-Iۡخ Laa ص (Surah 112). ✓ The surah by memory.	1

Lesson 6	✓ Test.	1

3. Zakah (Alms):

Zakah is the **3rd pillar** of Islam, and it is associated with prayer (salah) in 82 verses in the Qur'aan. It is financial worship. *The linguistic meaning*: The word Zakah (in Arabic) is a noun derived from the verb "Zaka" which means = grew - increased, so Zakah means growth and increasing. It is the yearly alms (tax) that all Muslims must pay on the wealth that they had for the previous twelve months. On money it is 2.5%. The proceeds are mainly given to the poor. There are also other categories of people that may receive Zakah.

What the student should know after each unit:

	Zakah Level I	**Duration (Hours)**
Lesson 1	✓ The importance, benefits, meaning and wisdom of ZAKAH. ✓ Who should pay, to whom, and what happens to those that don't pay Zakah. ✓ Rates and how to calculate the Zakah on Gold, Silver, Money, and Merchandise.	2
Lesson 2	✓ Test.	1

4. Siyam (Fasting):

Siyam is the **4th pillar** of Islam. It is the mandatory Fast done by all Muslims in the 9th month of the Hijra calendar, Ramadaan. All healthy adult Muslims, male and female, Fast from dawn to sunset.

What the student should know after each unit:

	Siyam Level I	**Duration (Hours)**
Lesson 1	✓ The importance, meaning, wisdom, conditions and etiquette's of Fasting and the month of Ramadaan. ✓ The rules and guidelines about Fasting (i.e. when to start/stop, who should fast, who need not fast, how to make up missed days, what breaks and what does not break the Fast, etc.).	2

	✓ The importance of Niyah. ✓ Recommended good deeds in Ramadaan. ✓ About optional Fasting.	
Lesson 2	✓ Test.	1

5. Hajj (Pilgrimage):

Hajj is the **5th pillar** of Islam. It is obligatory for those Muslims who can afford to make the journey to Makkah once in a lifetime. It is performed from the 8th to the 13th of Dhul-Hijja, which is the 12th month of the Hijra (lunar) calendar. The history of Hajj goes back to Prophet Ibraheem (may Allah's peace be upon him).

What the student should know after each unit:

	Hajj Level I	**Duration (Hours)**
Lesson 1	✓ The obligation of performing Hajj. ✓ The rewards of Hajj. ✓ The methods of Hajj. ✓ About Umrah. ✓ Some Hajj terminology. ✓ Some historical aspects of the Hajj rites and places. ✓ The pillars and obligatory duties of Hajj. ✓ Some issues related to women and Hajj.	2
Lesson 2	✓ Test.	1

6. A New Way of Life:

Apart from the 5 pillars, it is important for the new Muslim to be aware of certain rules and regulations that may be very different from what he or she is used to. This lesson covers briefly some of those issues.

What the student should know after this lesson:

A New Way of Life	**Duration (Hours)**

Lesson 1	✓ Aware of certain rules and regulations that may be very different from what he or she is used to (such as, dress code, food to eat, marriage, social life, morals, money, etc.).	2